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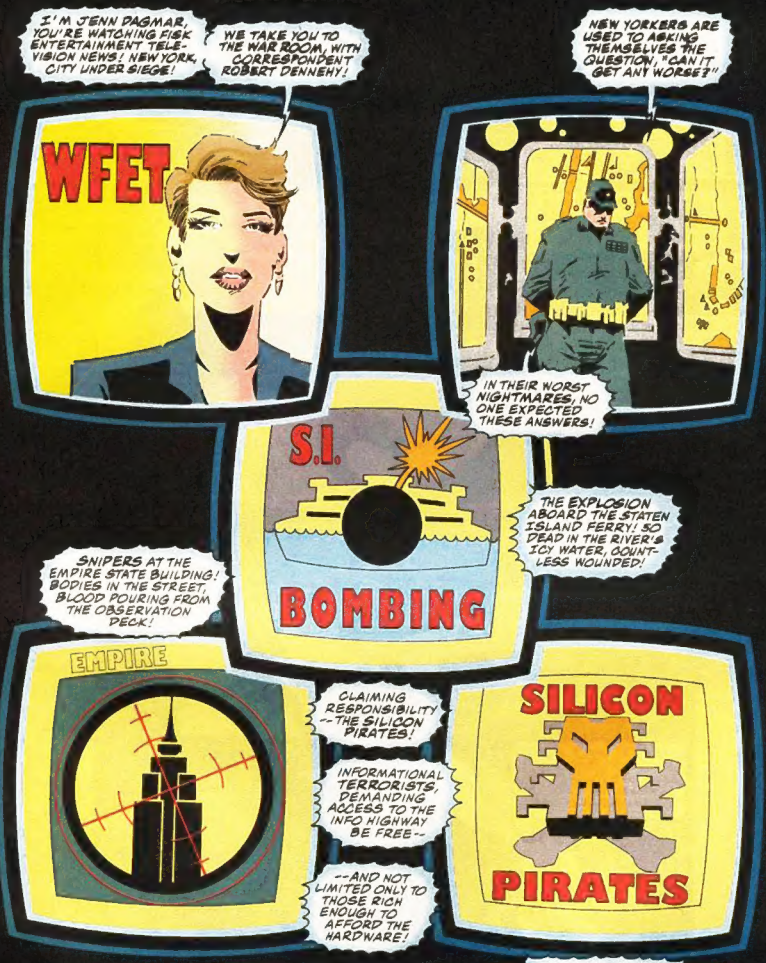

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ASTORIA, QUEENS. CYPHER-SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT. A SUBSIDIARY OF THE RAND-MEACHUM CORPORATION.
I'M ROBERT DENNEHY IN THE WAR ROOM, WFET NEWS!
CYPHER-SYSTEMS DESIGNS SECURITY PROGRAMS— SOFTWARE FOR KEEPING SECRETS.
HIGH UP THE CORPORATE LADDER, RAND-MEACHUM HEAD DANIEL RAND HAS A SECRET OF HIS OWN.
TRAINED IN THE MYTHIC CITY OF K'UN-L'UN, HE BEARS THE MARK OF THE DRAGON SHOU-LAO.
A BRAND THAT HAS EARNED HIM THE TITLE AND POWER OF IRON FIST.
SILENT ALARMS ALERTED THE WARRIOR TO INTRUDERS IN HIS COMPANY'S FACILITY.
MARTIAL ARTS SKILL LIKE NOTHING ELSE ON THE PLANET ENABLE HIM TO REACT WITH FURIOUS SPEED--
KROOM!

--AND DANGEROUS FORCE.
THERE CAN BE SERIOUS PENALTIES FOR TRESPASSING...
KLAANK!
I'D RATHER YOU DIDN'T...
DAREDEVIL?!
AFTER A FASHION.
IRON FIST, RIGHT? YOU'RE ONE OF THE "GOOD GUYS"?
SKKRNK
I LIKE TO THINK SO.
SNARK
SNARK
GLAD TO HEAR IT...

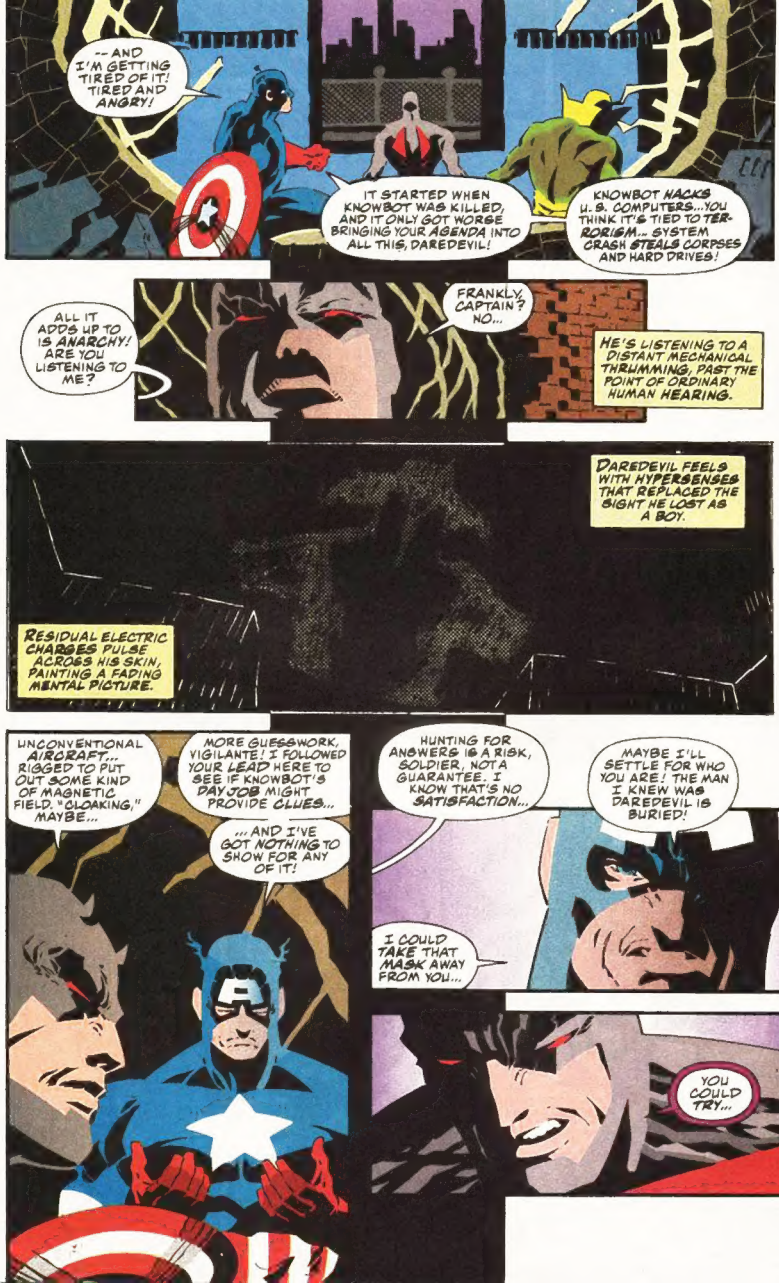
...COME JOIN THE FUN!
GLAD TO HAVE YOU BACK, DAREDEVIL!
OH, YEAH... I DIDN'T WANT STEEL COLLAR TO HAVE ALL THE FUN POUNDING SOME WHITE HAT!
TREE of KNOWLEDGE part 3
THE CHERNOBYL PACKET
by D.G. CHICHESTER & SCOTT McDANIEL
HECTOR COLLAZO INKER
OAKLEY & BABCOCK LETTERERS
JOE ANDREANI COLORIST
RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO CHIEF
"Hackers . . . say 'information is power.' We say 'power is power.' I want information . . . but I want it to lead to something. I want to break things–I want to build my things."
–"St. Virus"
self-proclaimed cyberpunk,
Utne Reader, July/August 1990

TAKE YOUR SHOT, TECHNO-SPIKE!
WHATSAMATTER, HORNHEAD? DON'TCHA GETTA CHARGE OUTTA MY PERSONALITY? GET IT? CHARGE!
I GOT IT. YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR'S JUST ONE MORE REASON TO PUT YOU DOWN.
DAREDEVIL RECALLS WHAT'S BROUGHT HIM AND CAPTAIN AMERICA TOGETHER.
A ROAD BEGINNING WITH MUTUAL SUSPICION AND TWO COMPUTER CRACKERS NAMED KNOWBOT AND SINCLAIR SPECTRUM.
A DEADLY PATH PLAGUED WITH INTRIGUES LIKE THE TEAM CALLING ITSELF SYSTEM CRASH.
I HOPE THAT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU'VE GOT YOUR HEART SET ON.
ALL I'VE GOT TO DO IS CONNECT ONE TIME...!
TWKAAM!
THE SERUM THAT GAVE THE SOLDIER HIS PHYSIQUE IS NOW A POISON INSIDE.

FINDING THE OPENING IN THE METAL SHELL IS A MIX OF PRECISION AND AGONY.
KRNK
ARGH!
CARE TO HELP OUT HERE, IRON FIST?
WHERE'S THAT SPARKLING PERSONALITY NOW, TECHNOSPIKE?
YOU'VE BEGUN THE MOVE, CAPTAIN... I ONLY NEED TO SEE THAT IT CONTINUES!
THE ROBOT'S OUT OF IT, INFOMORPH!
DO YOUR THING BEFORE WE JOIN HIM ON THE SCRAP HEAP!
CONSIGNED TO AN ALMOST TWO-DIMENSIONAL EXISTENCE--
--INFOMORPH'S LIFE ONLY TAKES ON DEPTH WHEN SHE MIMICS OTHERS SHE'S MET AND FILED.
ORGANIC RAYTRACING ON... RENDERING "KNOWBOT" IMAGE...
REPLAYING THEIR ACTIONS FOR THE BENEFIT OF SYSTEM CRASH.
FOLLOWING ANIMATION PATH... TYPING IN ACCESS CODES... DOWN-LOADING HARD DRIVE...

KNOWBOT?! BUT HE'S...
...DEAD...
WON'T BE LONG NOW 'TIL YOU'LL ALL BE THERE WITH HIM!
THAT FANCY SUIT'S GOT SOME INSULATION, DON'T IT, DAREDEVIL? TOO BAD...
DAREDEVIL'S INTERNAL RADAR CAN'T MAKE UP FOR THE FACT THAT HE'S BLIND--
--BUT IT CAN GIVE HIM A WINDOW INTO PLACES NO SIGHTED MAN CAN EVER "SEE."
THERE'S A MAIN POWER LINE UNDER THE FLOOR--TECHNO-SPIKE IS DRAWING HIS JUICE FROM THERE!
HOW DO YOU--?
DOES IT MATTER?
THE TASK AT HAND IS NOT ONE OF EXPLORATION, BUT OF ACTION!
IRON FIST FOCUSES HIS CHI, CHARGING HIS BLOW WITH ALL THE POWER HE CAN MARSHAL.
AND THESE DAYS, THAT IS FAR LESS THAN HIS OUTER LIMIT... THOUGH IT SERVES.

THE PARTY OVER SO SOON?
heh
I'VE GOT THE DRIVE! LET'S GO!
I'M NOT A ROBOT!
SHKRAAM
TECHNOSPIKE CALLED ME A ROBOT AGAIN, INFOMORPH!
NOW IS NOT THE TIME, STEEL COLLAR...
STOP CRYIN', YOU TRANSFORMERS' REJECT, AND GET US OUTTA HERE!
NICE WORK WITH THE CABLE, IRON FIST... GLAD YOU DIDN'T GET THE CHANCE TO LAND ONE OF THOSE ON ME!
AS AM I.
THEY WENT THROUGH HERE!
THAT KNOWLEDGE GAINS US... NOTHING.
NO SIGN?
I'VE SEEN STEEL COLLAR PULL THIS DISAPPEARING ACT BEFORE-


-- AND I'M GETTING TIRED OF IT! TIRED AND ANGRY!
IT STARTED WHEN KNOWBOT WAS KILLED, AND IT ONLY GOT WORSE BRINGING YOUR AGENDA INTO ALL THIS, DAREDEVIL!
KNOWBOT HACKS U.S. COMPUTERS...YOU THINK IT'S TIED TO TERRORISM... SYSTEM CRASH STEALS CORPSES AND HARD DRIVES!
ALL IT ADDS UP TO IS ANARCHY! ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?
FRANKLY, CAPTAIN? NO...
HE'S LISTENING TO A DISTANT MECHANICAL THRUMMING, PAST THE POINT OF ORDINARY HUMAN HEARING.
DAREDEVIL FEELS WITH HYPERSENSES THAT REPLACED THE SIGHT HE LOST AS A BOY.
RESIDUAL ELECTRIC CHARGES PULSE ACROSS HIS SKIN, PAINTING A FADING MENTAL PICTURE.
UNCONVENTIONAL AIRCRAFT... RIGGED TO PUT OUT SOME KIND OF MAGNETIC FIELD. "CLOAKING," MAYBE...
MORE GUESSWORK, VIGILANTE! I FOLLOWED YOUR LEAD HERE TO SEE IF KNOWBOT'S DAYJOB MIGHT PROVIDE CLUES...
...AND I'VE GOT NOTHING TO SHOW FOR ANY OF IT!
HUNTING FOR ANSWERS IS A RISK, SOLDIER, NOT A GUARANTEE. I KNOW THAT'S NO SATISFACTION...
MAYBE I'LL SETTLE FOR WHO YOU ARE! THE MAN I KNEW WAS DAREDEVIL IS BURIED!
I COULD TAKE THAT MASK AWAY FROM YOU...
YOU COULD TRY...

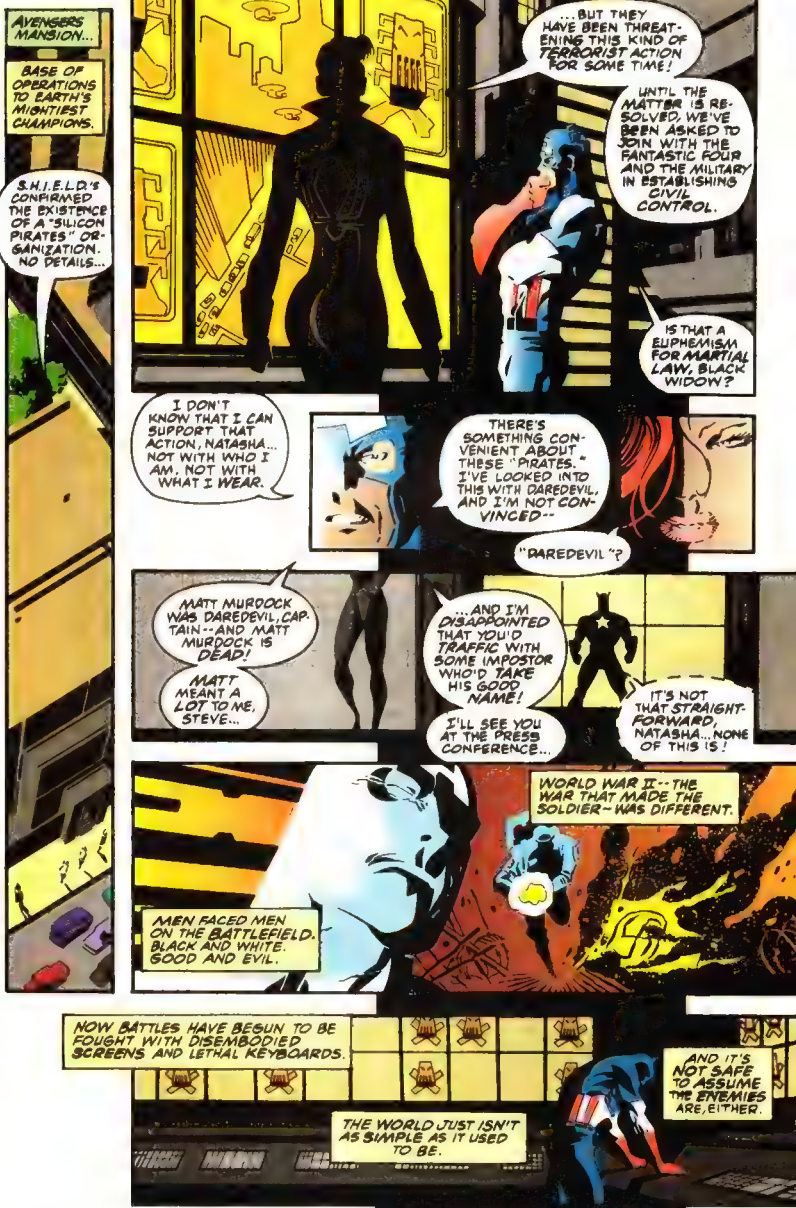
NEXT MORNING, AKROPOLIS EMPIRE EATS. 53rd STREET AND 7th AVENUE.
THOSE ARTIE AND JIM GUYS REALLY SHOOK YOU UP, KAREN...
IT WOULDN'T BE SO BAD, JILLIAN, IF IT WASN'T SO SOON ON TOP OF MATT'S...
...ON MATT'S BEING GONE...
I MISS HIM... Y'KNOW? AND IT'S SO MUCH, I FEEL LIKE I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO TURN, WHAT TO DO...
SURE, HON. AND THEN TO HAVE CREEPS LIKE THE O'FARELLS COME OUT OF YOUR PAST--
TAP! TAP!
KAREN! HEY!
DIRTBAG'S BACK FOR MORE?! I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS--
ARTIE?! WHERE'D YOU--
I'M SORRY FOR THESE GAMES, KAREN... BUT YOUR FRIEND'S SUCH A GOOD WATCHDOG--!
PLEASE... GO AWAY, ARTIE! I DON'T-- I WON'T GO BACK TO THAT!
PORN MADE US ALL A LOT OF MONEY, KAREN-- THIS WILL MAKE US MORE!
TELEDILDONICS-- THE INFO HIGHWAY TO THE BANK VAULT! TAKE A LOOK... BE PART OF IT WITH US!
I KNOW THIS IS ONE MORE THING ON TOP OF YOUR RECENT LOSS--
--BOTH ME AND JIM'S CONDOLENCES, REALLY!--
--BUT MAYBE A REAL DIRECTION WOULD HELP YOU GET YOUR MIND OFF--
ANOTHER ONE?! CLEAR OUT, DIRTY OLD MAN, BEFORE I GET THE COPS ON YOU, TOO!
WHAT FILTH! DON'T THEY KNOW YOU WORK AGAINST THAT SMUT NOW?
I MEAN, WHAT COULD THEY BE WANTING TO SELL YOU ON?
I DON'T KNOW, JILLIAN.
N- NOTHING I'D WANT TO BE PART OF AGAIN...

SINCLAIR SPECTRUM'S LOFT. BROOME STREET.
HAVE YOU EVER OPENED YOUR FRONT DOOR WITH JUST YOUR VOICE? YOU WILL.
EVER BEEN LOCKED OUTTA YOUR APARTMENT 'CAUSE YOU HAD LARYNGITIS? YOU WILL!
HAVE YOU EVER TUCKED YOUR BABY IN FROM A PHONE BOOTH? YOU WILL.
EVER BEEN BROUGHT UP ON CHARGES OF PARENTAL NEGLECT? YOU WILL!
GO BACK TO "MAGNUM, P.I., TOM!
YOU GOT MORE THAN COMMERCIALS TO WHINE ABOUT, SPECTRUM...
WHY PROSECUTOR MALPER...
...ARE YOU D YOUR GIRLFRIEND STILL HERE?
ALL NIGHT LISTENING TO YOUR LIP ISN'T MY IDEA OF A GOOD TIME, KID!
Oh, AND HAVING COSTUMED STORMTROOPERS LIKE DAREDEVIL AND CAPTAIN AMERICA PASS ME ON TO YOU WAS MY DREAM DATE!
MAYBE SHE'LL SHUT UP WHEN SHE'S HIT WITH THE EVIDENCE WE'LL PULL OUT OF HER COMPUTERS!
DON'T GET COCKY, G-MAN!
WHAT?!
SHE'S GOT COPPER WIRE FRAMING THE DOOR, MS. MALPER!
THE COIL'S SET UP A LOW GRADE MAGNETIC FIELD... ENOUGH TO WIPE THESE HARD DRIVES CLEAN!
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? WOULDN'T YOU RATHER THIS CIRCUIT BOARD TALENT TAKE YOU SOMEWHERE POSITIVE?
LIKE THE SHINING STAR OF THE "INFO HIGHWAY"? WANNA KNOW WHERE THAT LEADS?

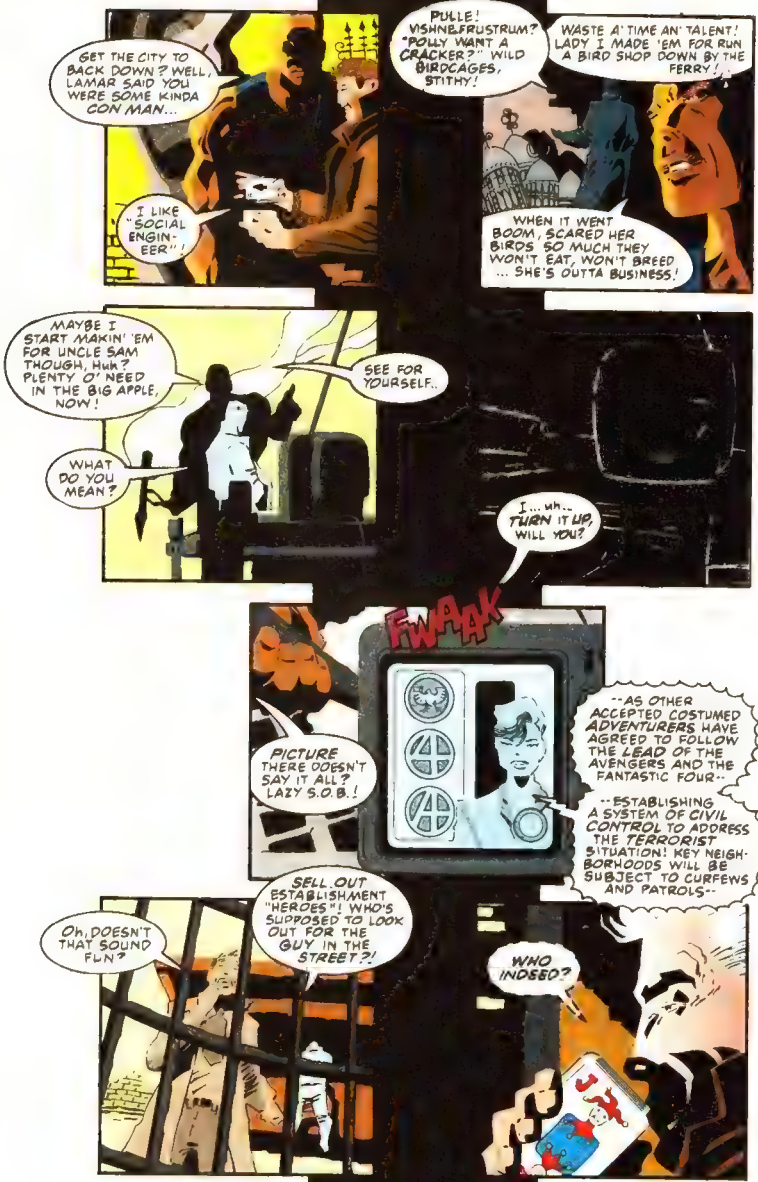
"TRY THIS BACK ROAD..
"ENGELBART FALLS, MONTANA, RIGHT?"
"COUPLE A' 'DELIVERANCE' REJECTS WITH BADGES GO AFTER A DRIFTER.
"PROTECT AND SERVE. ALL THAT GOOD STUFF."
"ANYWAY, THE BARNEY FIFE TWINS WOULDN'T KNOW A GIGABYTE FROM A GAMEBOY
"...SO THEY HAD NO IDEA THEY'D JUST TRASHED A PORTABLE BBS... AN ELECTRONIC BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEM!
"WHILE THEY PERFORMED THEIR CIVIC DUTY...
LOG OFF.....
"...THIS BBS DIED A SILICON CHIP DEATH."

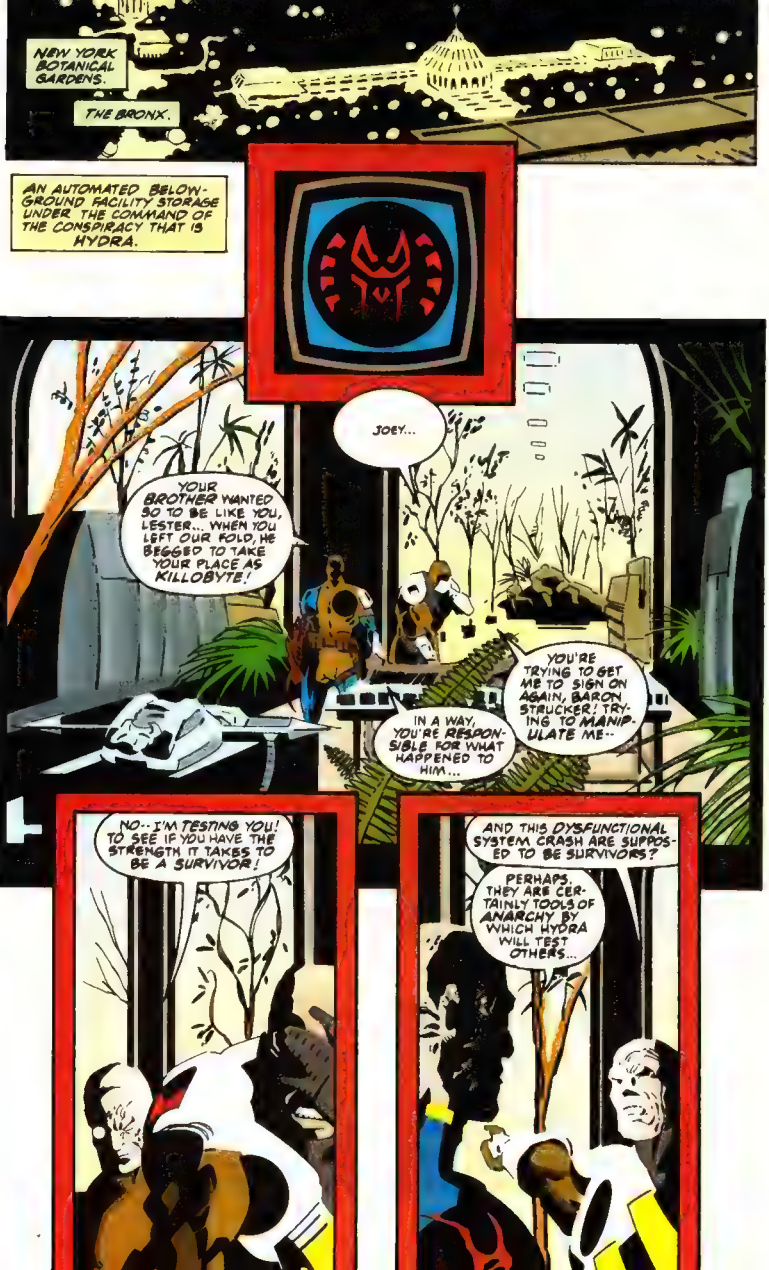
"BUT THIS BBS WASN'T SOME RUN OF THE MILL 'COMPUSERVE' OR 'AMERICAN ON-LINE'--
"--THIS WAS A VERY EXCLUSIVE CYBERSPACE MEETING PLACE!
"BIG NAME ROCK STARS... POWERHOUSE JUDGES AND BUSINESSMEN... MILITARY BRASS... ALL LOGGED ON AND TRADED MESSAGES!
"TO THEM, IT WAS A VIRTUAL COMMUNITY, A HOME AWAY FROM HOME...
"THAT ENGELBART FALLS HAD BURNED TO THE GROUND
"THE ELECTRONIC BROTHERHOOD DECIDED TO RETURN THE FAVOR.
CLOSED
"THEY USED THEIR CLOUT TO HIT THE TOWN WITH LAWSUITS... HARASSMENT... WHATEVER IT TOOK THAT MONEY AND POWER COULD BUY."
EIGHT MONTHS LATER, ENGELBART FALLS ISN'T EVEN A DIRT PATH ALONG THE SIDE OF THE DIGITAL SUPERHIGHWAY--
THAT-- THAT STORY'S NOT TRUE.
GIVE IT TIME.

CYBER-SYSTEMS, QUEENS...
DAREDEVIL'S RADAR STROBES THE TINY IMAGE.
FINGERS TRACE THE FIBROUS PATTERN IN THE LEAF.
IT'S NOT MUCH...
CERTAINLY NOT FOR SEARCHING SO MANY HOURS? BUT A LONG JOURNEY...
BEGINS WITH A SIMPLE PLAN. THANK YOU, GRASSHOPPER, I USED TO TUNE IN TO KUNG FU, TOO!
I'M SORRY ...IT'S BEEN A LONG NIGHT! THANKS FOR STICKING AROUND...
I HAVE... COMMITMENTS... TO THE OWNER. I'VE PROMISED I'LL REMAIN UNTIL THE CLEAN UP ARRIVES...
ENHANCED SENSES MAP THE ROOM TARGETING THE OUT-OF-PLACE...
...SETTLING ON A FRAGRANT ODDITY ON THE MACHINED LANDSCAPE.
THESE ARE NOT NATIVE NEW YORKERS...
...THEY'RE TUMERIC-- CURCOMA LOUGA--AN ASIAN HERB.
SYSTEM CRASH COULD HAVE BROUGHT THEM IN. BUT HOW DOES THAT HELP?
YOU SURE?
I'VE DONE SOME TRAVELLING IN THAT REGION.
MAYBE BY TRACING THE TREE BACK ALONG IT'S ROOTS...

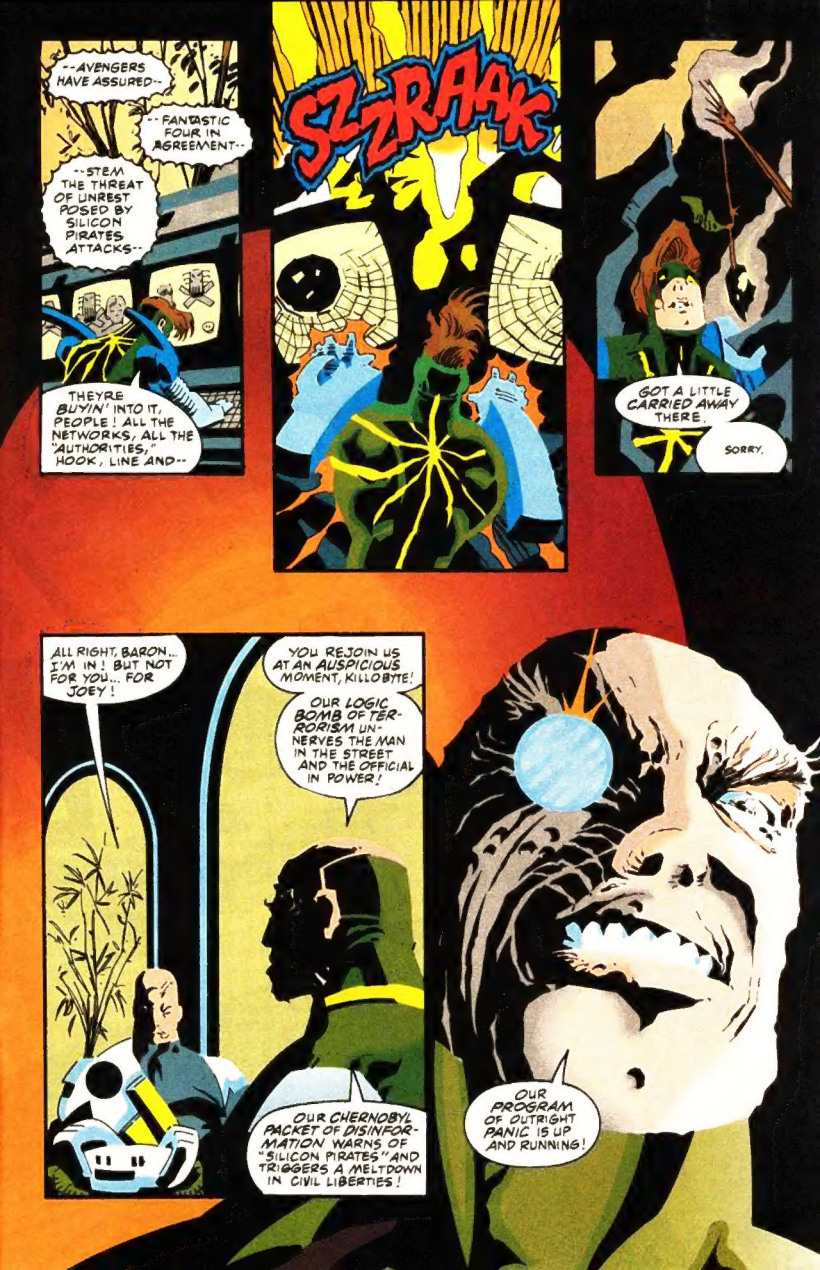

AVENGERS MANSION...
BASE OF OPERATIONS TO EARTH'S MIGHTIEST CHAMPIONS.
S.H.I.E.L.D.'S CONFIRMED THE EXISTENCE OF A "SILICON PIRATES" ORGANIZATION. NO DETAILS...
...BUT THEY HAVE BEEN THREATENING THIS KIND OF TERRORIST ACTION FOR SOME TIME!
UNTIL THE MATTER IS RESOLVED, WE'VE BEEN ASKED TO JOIN WITH THE FANTASTIC FOUR AND THE MILITARY IN ESTABLISHING CIVIL CONTROL.
IS THAT A EUPHEMISM FOR MARTIAL LAW, BLACK WIDOW?
I DON'T KNOW THAT I CAN SUPPORT THAT ACTION, NATASHA... NOT WITH WHO I AM. NOT WITH WHAT I WEAR.
THERE'S SOMETHING CONVENIENT ABOUT THESE "PIRATES." I'VE LOOKED INTO THIS WITH DAREDEVIL, AND I'M NOT CONVINCED--
"DAREDEVIL"?
MATT MURDOCK WAS DAREDEVIL, CAPTAIN--AND MATT MURDOCK IS DEAD!
MATT MEANT A LOT TO ME, STEVE...
...AND I'M DISAPPOINTED THAT YOU'D TRAFFIC WITH SOME IMPOSTOR WHO'D TAKE HIS GOOD NAME!
I'LL SEE YOU AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE...
IT'S NOT THAT STRAIGHTFORWARD, NATASHA...NONE OF THIS IS!
WORLD WAR II--THE WAR THAT MADE THE SOLDIER--WAS DIFFERENT.
MEN FACED MEN ON THE BATTLEFIELD. BLACK AND WHITE. GOOD AND EVIL.
NOW BATTLES HAVE BEGUN TO BE FOUGHT WITH DISEMBODIED SCREENS AND LETHAL KEYBOARDS.
AND IT'S NOT SAFE TO ASSUME THE ENEMIES ARE, EITHER.
THE WORLD JUST ISN'T AS SIMPLE AS IT USED TO BE.

AVENUE C.
THE FAST TALKER LIKES TO INTRO HIMSELF AS JACK BATLIN--
--AN HOMAGE TO HIS FATHER, "BATTLING" JACK MURDOCK.
LOOK, LAMAR, I GOT PLACES TO HANG ALL OVER THE CITY--
BUT WHERE DO YOU CALL HOME, JACK? STITHY'S GOT A PLACE...
BEHIND THE "JACK" FACADE, HE'S STILL MATT MURDOCK--
--HIDDEN AWAY WHEN WORD OF HIS DAREDEVIL IDENTITY BECAME A CITYWIDE TOPIC OF SPECULATION.
...AND I OWE YOU FOR SAVING ME FROM THAT RIP-OFF ARTIST!
STITHY'S "PLACE"--IT LOOK LIKE THIS ONE?
EVERYONE AROUND MURDOCK WAS AT RISK FROM SOME CRAZY GOING AFTER HIM 'CAUSE HE MIGHT BE DAREDEVIL.
BETTER FOR EVERYONE IF MATT MURDOCK VANISHED. BETTER FOR EVERYONE...
...EXCEPT MAYBE MATT MURDOCK.
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING... QUID GUBUSTIUM!
NOT THE FIRST THING THAT CAME TO MIND...
"WHAT A DUMP!"
OKAY, YOU WERE RIGHT THE FIRST TIME!
TWO OF YOU FINISHED BAD MOUTHIN'? CLEAR OUT, THEN! THE CITY JUST CONDEMNED THIS DUMP --I CAN SAY IT, YOU CAN'T--
--SO I GOTTA MOVE TO MY OTHER PLACE! MEANIN' IT'S OFF THE MARKET, AND YOU'RE BACK ON THE STREET, BATLIN!
MAKE YOU A TRADE, STITHY...
...I'LL GET THE CITY TO HOLD OFF ON THIS DUMP --OOPS! SORRY!--AND YOU GIVE ME A YEAR OF FREE RENT ON THE OTHER PLACE!
PLUS SOME OF YOUR METAL WORK ...I NEED WORK-OUT BARS, KEEP IN SHAPE.


GET THE CITY TO BACK DOWN? WELL, LAMAR SAID YOU WERE SOME KINDA CON MAN...
I LIKE "SOCIAL ENGINEER"!
PULLE! VISHNE&FRUSTRUM? "POLLY WANT A CRACKER?" WILD BIRDCAGES, STITHY!
WASTE A' TIME AN' TALENT! LADY I MADE 'EM FOR RUN A BIRD SHOP DOWN BY THE FERRY!
WHEN IT WENT BOOM, SCARED HER BIRDS SO MUCH THEY WON'T EAT, WON'T BREED ... SHE'S OUTTA BUSINESS!
MAYBE I START MAKIN' 'EM FOR UNCLE SAM THOUGH, HUH? PLENTY O' NEED IN THE BIG APPLE, NOW!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
SEE FOR YOURSELF..
I... UH... TURN IT UP, WILL YOU?
FWAAK
PICTURE THERE DOESN'T SAY IT ALL? LAZY S.O.B.!
--AS OTHER ACCEPTED COSTUMED ADVENTURERS HAVE AGREED TO FOLLOW THE LEAD OF THE AVENGERS AND THE FANTASTIC FOUR--
--ESTABLISHING A SYSTEM OF CIVIL CONTROL TO ADDRESS THE TERRORIST SITUATION! KEY NEIGHBORHOODS WILL BE SUBJECT TO CURFEWS AND PATROLS--
OH, DOESN'T THAT SOUND FUN?
SELL-OUT ESTABLISHMENT "HEROES"! WHO'S SUPPOSED TO LOOK OUT FOR THE GUY IN THE STREET?!
WHO INDEED?


NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDENS.
THE BRONX.
AN AUTOMATED BELOW-GROUND FACILITY STORAGE UNDER THE COMMAND OF THE CONSPIRACY THAT IS HYDRA.
JOEY...
YOUR BROTHER WANTED SO TO BE LIKE YOU, LESTER... WHEN YOU LEFT OUR FOLD, HE BEGGED TO TAKE YOUR PLACE AS KILLOBYTE!
IN A WAY, YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM...
YOU'RE TRYING TO GET ME TO SIGN ON AGAIN, BARON STRUCKER! TRYING TO MANIPULATE ME--
NO-- I'M TESTING YOU! TO SEE IF YOU HAVE THE STRENGTH IT TAKES TO BE A SURVIVOR!
AND THIS DYSFUNCTIONAL SYSTEM CRASH ARE SUPPOSED TO BE SURVIVORS?
PERHAPS. THEY ARE CERTAINLY TOOLS OF ANARCHY BY WHICH HYDRA WILL TEST OTHERS...

TECHNOSPIKE CALLED ME A ROBOT AGAIN... I REALLY HATE THAT!
DON'T SWEAT IT, COLLAR-- WANT SOME SHAKE?--
--I DON'T SEE YOU AS A ROBOT!
REALLY, WIREHEAD? YOU DON'T? I'M NOT, YOU KNOW-- L-LOOK...
HANG ON A SEC... I BEEN OUT OF THE MUD TOO LONG!
THE MULTI-USER DUNGEON. WIREHEAD'S PRIVATE IMMERSIVE TECHNOLOGY.
>YOU SEE A TOWERING CREATURE BEFORE YOU, STINKING OF DANK MINESHAFTS.
I SEE YOU AS AN ORC OF MORDOR... OR MAYBE A GRUE...
THANKS FOR NOTHING...
YOU NEED TO RELAX, MORPH! I GOT JUST THE THING--ME AN' YOU, SOME HOT OIL--
YOU DISGUST ME, BITMAP! NOW UNLESS YOU CAN HELP ME DECODING KNOWBOT'S ENCRYPTION...
WHOA! LONG HOURS HAVE GOT YOU LOOKIN' A LITTLE 2-D THERE!
TOUGH NOT HAVIN' A LIFE A' YOUR OWN, HUH, PANCAKE FACE?
ORGANIC PHONG RENDERING... TEXTURE MAPPING BITMAP IMAGE...
REMEMBER WHEN YOU LOOKED LIKE THIS, DWARF?
HEY, YOU DON'T GOTTA GET NASTY...


--AVENGERS HAVE ASSURED--
--FANTASTIC FOUR IN AGREEMENT--
--STEM THE THREAT OF UNREST POSED BY SILICON PIRATES ATTACKS--
THEYRE BUYIN' INTO IT, PEOPLE! ALL THE NETWORKS, ALL THE "AUTHORITIES," HOOK, LINE AND--
SZZRAAK
GOT A LITTLE CARRIED AWAY THERE.
SORRY.
ALL RIGHT, BARON... I'M IN! BUT NOT FOR YOU... FOR JOEY!
YOU REJOIN US AT AN AUSPICIOUS MOMENT, KILLOBYTE!
OUR LOGIC BOMB OF TERRORISM UNNERVES THE MAN IN THE STREET AND THE OFFICIAL IN POWER!
OUR CHERNOBYL PACKET OF DISINFORMATION WARNS OF "SILICON PIRATES" AND TRIGGERS A MELTDOWN IN CIVIL LIBERTIES!
OUR PROGRAM OF OUTRIGHT PANIC IS UP AND RUNNING!

"AND IN ALL THE CITY OF NEW YORK, THERE WON'T BE A MAN WITHOUT FEAR..."
NEXT: GAMBIT... "DISINFOMOCRACY"!

REDLINES

Greetings! As you may have noticed, we have a masthead gracing this month's page, just as we promised last issue. But, while gazing lovingly at said letterhead, you may not have realized that Ralph Macchio is the editor of this mag, and his coffee and paper are delivered to him by Matt Idelson, asst. editor. Of course, nobody really cares about that stuff, so let's get down to business.

Before getting to this month's letters, we're going to keep our promise and print the letter (and accompanying response) that most stood out during those bygone months of obliterating backgrounds. This month's letter was printed in DAREDEVIL # 321:

Dear Marvel,

Regretfully, I am writing this letter with tear-soaked eyes. I just read in *Hero* magazine that you plan on giving Daredevil a new suit--possibly even armor--for his 30th anniversary. Please don't do this to him. I'm begging you not to. Don't get me wrong, change is good, but this is too radical of a change. I could understand if you wanted to give him his old suit back, or even if you wanted to make some minor alterations in his present costume . . . but if you want to change him so drastically, I won't be able to recognize him as Daredevil. There are even sketches of him without his horns! Think of it . . . Spider-Man without the spider on his chest . . . Captain America without his shield . . . it just seems so ludicrous.

I see no need to alter the character to drum up sales. This is a tactic that the Distinguished Competition uses! Why not go back to old times when Marvel was new and just starting? Back then you were original and innovative with your comics. More emphasis was placed on the stories, not on hype. I'm on my hands and knees begging you not to change Daredevil's suit.

In closing, I would like to say, please don't take the easy way out to gain high sales, but instead, put your noses to the grindstone, and come up with new and better stories that intrigue the reader. Daredevil was one of Mighty Marvel's cornerstones in the comic book industry. It would be a travesty to see him treated in this manner. Please take to heart these suggestions, and thanks for listening.

Sincerely,
Scott Eiler
(Address withheld by request)

We're putting your opinions to the test, Scott. We think innovation, originality, and intrigue have become the cornerstones of our current storylines. We're not forcing you to like our new approach, but we would like to be given the chance to impress you. What do you think? Let us know.

(AND NOW, BACK TO THE PRESENT)

Dear Ralph,

I like it. I like it a lot.

I have been a Daredevil fan for close to 25 years, and I gotta tell ya, I had just about given up on the old boy. You, or your predecessors, have received probably half a dozen letters from me over the past five years or so, basically complaining about the way the character had been handled (I didn't expect the letters to get printed, I just wanted the people in charge to know that I was not happy). The cycle went something like this: Hero goes through a crisis, suffers a trauma, gets his act together, puts on his red tights again, and picks up exactly where he left off prior to that particular trauma. My sole desire was to see a break in this annoying and seemingly unending cycle, and it appears that you have come through in a big way (I say "appears since, like most people, I tend to remain a bit skeptical given the historical treatment of the character). My "desire" was to see the character elevated to a new plateau . . . do something completely different, unexpected, new, and by all means, do not return him to the same old jazz after the "something new" had ended.

My hat is off to the entire creative team: Mr. Chichester, who I had little faith in when he originally stepped in, has proven himself to be an incredibly innovative writer, while being true to the character of Daredevil; Mr. McDaniel, who managed to bring back the Colan/Miller Daredevil who worked the nights like a true "Dark Knight" should; And last, but definitely not least, Mr. Macchio, who obviously worked hard to see that the whole thing finally happened.

Please, please continue on with what you've started; I think the death of Murdock and the Elektra/Chaste/Hand angle is a perfect opportunity to take Daredevil to new heights. It appears that you have the full and undivided attention of the industry at present . . . keep it fresh and innovative. I mean, I think that we have definitely established within the last few years that trauma just doesn't cut it. Chichester has accomplished with Daredevil what Peter David accomplished with the Hulk. Keep up the good work.

An avid fan once more,
Greg McQueen
7314 Moss Wood
Sugar Land, TX 77479

The only way a team can bring a book to new heights, is to remain faithful and observant to the events that have occurred thus far. It seems that "Team Daredevil" (or "The Three Blind Mice" as we like to call them) have found that creative spark from the history of the character that you and they experienced. Glad you're still aboard, Greg, and we're glad you like the new direction.

Dear Redlines,

I have a couple of questions I hope you can answer. First off, was that Baron Wolfgang Von Strucker on the last page, the manipulator of this issue's events? I thought he died at the end of the SHIELD series. Secondly, is there any truth to the rumor that Elektra will be getting her own series of some sort? I'd really love to see a deeper exploration of just who she is now.

Eric Crown
(Address withheld by request)

1) Yes, Baron Strucker is the man behind the throne, and he's badder than three-month old milk! He also has this annoying habit of escaping death, and it looks like he did it to us again!

2) As for the ever-mystifying Ms. Elektra, only time will tell. Keep watching.

NEXT ISSUE: Gambit (duh, who?) drops by to give DD a hand as "Tree of Knowledge" rockets onward with "Disinfomocracy" by Chichester, McDaniel, and Collazo (you were expecting someone else, perhaps?).